

TRUST SUIT THREAT TO PUBLIC GOOD -- A & P

Describing the civil suit to dissolve The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company as a threat to the welfare and living standards of every American citizen, officials of the company announced today they would oppose it with every legitimate means.

The suit, filed in Federal Court for the Southern District of New York, asks the court to order the company to dispose of its manufacturing and processing facilities and to break up the company into smaller chains.

Statement of The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company on civil suit filed by Anti-Trust Division in New York City follows: "This action is a threat to the welfare and living standards of every American citizen. If successful, it will mean less food on every dinner table and fewer dollars in every pay envelope. This is not just an effort to destroy A and P but an attack on the entire system of efficient low cost, low-profit mass distribution which this company pioneered.

"A and P was the first chain store in this country and the methods we developed have been adopted by other grocers, as well as merchants in other lines. There are today literally hundreds of chain stores and voluntary groups of individual merchants operating with the same methods and in the same pattern here under attack.

"If the anti-trust lawyers succeed in destroying A and P, the way will be cleared for the destruction of every other efficient large-scale distributor.

"There is nothing even approaching monopoly here; for as every housewife knows, the retail grocery business is the most competitive in the country and we do only a small part of it. Nor was there ever any charge that we raised prices; for the whole basis of this attack is the fact that we sold good food too cheap.

"There is nothing in our oper-

ations, or in any previous court decisions involving us, or in the anti-trust laws themselves to justify the dissolution of A and P.

"Obviously, it is the theory of the anti-trust lawyers that the people of America have no right to patronize a company if their patronage will make that company grow; and that any big business must be destroyed simply because it is big, and even if the public gets hurt in the process.

"This action is just opposite to the purpose of the anti-trust laws, which were meant to increase competition and keep prices down; for if it succeeds, it will serve only to cut down competition and force prices up. A and P's policy always maintained and kept alive the spirit of competition.

"Frankly, the owners of A and P could make enormous amounts of money by breaking up this company, as the anti-trust lawyers wish, and selling off the parts.

"But we believe this attack is a threat to millions of consumers who rely on us for quality foods at low prices; to hundreds of thousands of farmers who rely on us for fast, low-cost distribution of their products; and to our 110,000 loyal employees.

"There has never been any question in our minds that it is good business and good citizenship to sell good food as cheaply as possible, and we feel that it is our responsibility to our customers, our suppliers and our employees to defend this company and that theory by every legitimate means."

HOUSING SHORTAGE FAR FROM 'CAUGHT-UP'

Los Angeles County's housing shortage is far from being 'caught-up' declared Verle N. Fry, executive vice-president, Builders' Control Service, Inc., Los Angeles construction fund disbursement firm, in citing statistical evidence refuting certain claims that the area is built up to needs.

Fry reported that the best statistical studies disclose that at least 40,000 more residential units are needed in the county to provide the same number of dwellings per thousand population that existed in 1940, the year every authority considers as normal.

These additional 40,000 will not be provided until some time in 1950, said Fry in stating that, in the meantime, it is false for anyone to say that the housing shortage is ended.

"At the moment, some 15,000 homes, representing a land development and building program of \$160,000,000, are under construction throughout the county," said Fry. "Interestingly, records show that virtually every home built so far this year has been sold before completed.

"Some persons, erroneously in-

ed that the county contains a huge backlog of unsold new houses, but this is contradicted by surveys which show that only approximately 1 per cent of the new homes finished in a survey sample of 16,000 units in nearly 210 tracts were unsold three months after completion—unsold because of location, price, or design.

"The GI and non-veteran demand for new homes is demonstrated every week-end by the thousands who visit the 250 tract projects under construction throughout the county, and by the fact that one development recently sold \$1,000,000 of new homes in one day, and now is reported selling at the rate of \$1,000,000 per week.

"Both construction and sales records continue at boom proportions compared to any pre-war index.

"Further proof that the housing demand is far from ended is seen in the fact that most of the 100,000 persons now living in trailers in the county want to move into conventional homes, that 18 to 20 per cent of families are still doubled up, and that at least 22 per cent of the families in the area plan to move into new living quarters within the ensuing three years.

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